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intrust it with the further duty of placing the commissions for any works of art to be executed upon the order of the city."

Has the late Lake Front Columbus or the Columbus Fountain taught us anything yet?



THE EDITOR.

MR. J. C. VAN DYCK, in a criticism on "Tuscan Songs," written and illustrated by Miss Francesca Alexander, says some very pointed things concerning Pre-Raphaelitism. The article (in the *Dial*, March 10), is too long to reprint entire, but the following extract will give one a clear idea of this rather forced and unnatural school in England:

"It was discovered that these painters (the Pre-Raphaelite Italians) had a wonderful charm of sincerity and honesty in their paintings; that they convinced one by their truth, their frankness, their earnestness of statement. It was also discovered that they did everything, from high to low, with an exacting detail, making much of flowers and grasses, and dwelling long upon such things as patterns, brocades and jewels. Immediately the conclusion was jumped at that the fine spirit of a Botticelli or a Carpaccio was the result of a 'loving care' in the handling of detail. Then, it was further concluded, that the spirit could be regained by the moderns if they would but take up the detail with the same 'loving care.' The result was Pre-Raphaelitism in England, with Holman Hunt, Millais and Rosetti as disciples, and Ruskin as prophet. It was an art movement 'that endeavored to turn the world backward by reproducing a past art,' and it imitated only its shortcomings and mannerisms. The imitators were of a mature civilization which finds expression through breadth and synthesis, while their prototypes were poets of the spring-time of the renaissance, and naïvely and as children saw detail and parts without any well-defined *ensemble*. It is the last and most conspicuous illustration of the folly of trying to make the past live in the present exactly as it lived before. Thorwaldsen and Canova failed to become Greeks in sculpture. David's classicism was a misfit and the symbolists today in Paris — of all places the most *fin de siècle* and materialistic — are doomed to failure. To have any vitality art must reflect its own surroundings, deal with living things and breathe the atmosphere of its own environment."



In the *New England Magazine* for March, Mr. Louis H. Gibson, whose paper on "The Machine In Art" appeared in the March number

of BRUSH AND PENCIL, makes a strong plea for a more national expression in our architecture, a branch of the arts "the least vital for the reason that it rests so strongly upon the traditions of the past." Our painting, sculpture and literature has some national tone, but we look in vain for anything monumental and characteristic in architecture. He cites as examples the two splendid library buildings in Boston and Washington, with their decorations. Boston represents New England feeling and culture, but its library building might be just as fittingly placed in any other large city in America. All that Boston, Massachusetts, has lived, thought, felt, finds no embodiment here. The National Library gives a more conspicuous example still. Washington is the capital, our representative city, which might reflect our national life and the spirit of our democratic institutions. The library building might almost be in any modern city in any civilized country. It is a magnificent structure—the decorations are on a grand, a magnificent scale; but where is the *spirit* of America embodied? Speaking of these decorations, he says: "Here we show our lack of resource, patriotism, philosophy, reason and education. We are thinkers, we are producers of history and literature, we are great inventors, our hearts beat warmly, our minds are active, our history and our lives are full of great decorative subjects. Why do not some of these find expression in our public buildings?"

"We find encouragement for the future in some of our commercial structures and in the modern spirit of domestic architecture. . . . The spirit of domesticity is a dominant force in our time. The love of home is a sentiment high enough to form the nucleus of great art. Great architecture must come from a new and original impulse. We have an opportunity in home life. Art must now be democratic, individual, as never before. Hence the people should have a knowledge which will enable them knowingly to demand a worthy expression."

When it does find adequate expression the world will hail with joy the advent of a great art, for such it will surely be.



It is a pleasure to learn that the appreciation of the work of the Chicago Orchestra in the East has been so enthusiastic and so general. With this stamp of approval, some of us here in Chicago may be encouraged to believe that the music of Mr. Theodore Thomas' orchestra is really good. Some day a collection of paintings and sculpture will be taken East and find a place with the art there that merits recognition and praise. Until that happens our people will be loath to believe that anything good in paint or clay can come out of Chicago. When will we have the courage of our convictions?